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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0912
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KINGSTON 3605

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, SHUM, JM
SUBJECT: GREEN BAY INQUEST TO DATE SUGGESTS EXTRA-LEGAL
ACTIVITY BY JDF

REFERENCE: KINGSTON 2558

1. SUMMARY: THE INQUEST INTO THE JANUARY 5 INCIDENT AT
THE JAMAICA DEFENCE FORCE (JDF) FIRING RANGE AT GREEN BAY
IN WHICH FIVE MEN WERE SLAIN BEGAN ON MARCH 20. ALTHOUGH
STILL TWO WEEKS FROM CONCLUSION, THE TESTIMONY TO DATE
CONFRONTS THE CORONER AND JURY WITH TWO CONFLICTING VERSIONS
OF WHAT OCCURRED. ONE, THE "OFFICIAL" VERSION, ASSERTS THAT THE
INCIDENT OSTENSIBLY GREW OUT OF AN EFFORT BY THE JDF TO
SEIZE ARMS WHICH WERE TO BE SMUGGLED INTO JAMAICA AND TO
ARREST THOSE RECEIVING THEM. THE SECOND, WHICH PRESENTLY
SEEMS MORE CREDIBLE, CLAIMS THAT THE SLAIN MEN, AS WELL
AS FIVE OTHERS WHO ESCAPED, WERE LURED TO THE FIRING RANGE
BY THE JDF WITH THE INTENTION OF KILLING THEM AS AN EXAMPLE TO
OTHER TROUBLE-MAKERS IN THE KINGSTON GHETTO. ALTHOUGH
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THE NATURE OF THE VERDICT CANNOT BE PREDICTED, IT IS NOW
CLEAR THAT (A) THE JDF HAS SUFFERED A GRIEVOUS LOSS OF
MORALE AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE, (B) THE GOVERNMENT HAS SUFFERED
EMBARRASSMENT BECAUSE THE OPERATION WAS HANDLED BADLY
AS WELL AS BECAUSE OF ITS EXTRA-LEGAL CHARACTER, AND (C)
THE DISADVANTAGED IN THE KINGSTON GHETTO ARE AWAITING THE
VERDICT WITH KEEN INTEREST, RECOGNIZING THAT IT WILL

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REVEAL WHETHER OR NOT THE LAW APPLIES EQUALLY TO ALL JAMAICANS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CORONER'S INQUEST INTO THE JANUARY 5 SLAYING OF FIVE MEN AT THE JDF'S GREEN BAY FIRING RANGE HAS BEEN IN PROGRESS FOR FIVE WEEKS. IT IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE FOR ANOTHER TWO WEEKS, BUT IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT THE JURY MUST WEIGH, IN REACHING ITS VERDICT, TWO VERY DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE INCIDENT. THE FIRST, "OFFICIAL" VERSION IS BASED ON THE TESTIMONY OF VARIOUS JDF OFFICERS AND MEN, AND ASSERTS THAT:

-- THERE WAS A PLOT TO SMUGGLE ARMS INTO JAMAICA AT GREEN BAY, ALLEGEDLY FOR DELIVERY TO "GUNMEN FROM THE (OPPOSITION JAMAICA LABOUR PARTY) JLP", WHICH WAS DISCOVERED BY THE JDF'S INTELLIGENCE UNIT.

-- THE INTELLIGENCE UNIT AND THE JDF'S "SPECIAL STRIKE FORCE" PLANNED AN AMBUSH OPERATION TO SEIZE THE GUNS AND THOSE RECEIVING THEM (WHO WERE ALSO SUPPOSED TO BE PLANNING TO "CONDUCT TARGET PRACTICE").

-- WHILE NO GUN-RUNNING ATTEMPT OCCURRED, A PARTY OF 14 MEN WAS SURPRISED AT THE RANGE. WHEN THEY REFUSED TO SURRENDER AFTER A WARNING BURST OF GUNFIRE AND INSTEAD FIRED ON THE "SPECIAL STRIKE FORCE" UNIT, A CONFIDENTIAL

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FIREFIGHT TOOK PLACE IN WHICH FIVE DIED.

-- WHILE NO WEAPONS WERE FOUND IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF THE INCIDENT, AN UNUSABLE REVOLVER WAS SUBSEQUENTLY FOUND IN THE UNDERBRUSH NEARBY.

3. THE SECOND VERSION HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY OTHER JDF OFFICERS WHO HAD SPOKEN TO COLLEAGUES PRESENT AT GREEN BAY AND BY CIVILIANS WHO HAD BEEN AMONG THOSE AT GREEN BAY. IT ASSERTS THAT:

-- THE JDF INTELLIGENCE UNIT LURED TEN MEN TO GREEN BAY BY PROMISES OF ARMS AND MONEY. THIS INCLUDED A DISPLAY AT A MEETING AT THE NEARBY ADVENTURE INN A FEW DAYS BEFORE JANUARY 5 OF SUBMACHINE GUNS DRAWN FROM THE JDF ARMORY.

-- NONE OF THE MEN TAKEN TO THE GREEN BAY RANGE BORE ARMS.

-- ONCE AT THE RANGE, THEY WERE GROUPED TOGETHER. THEY WERE THEN FIRED UPON WITHOUT ANY WARNING BY THE

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"SPECIAL STRIKE FORCE" UNIT AS IT LAY IN AMBUSH.

4. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT WITH ANY SENSE OF CERTAINTY THE OUTCOME OF THE INQUEST, ALTHOUGH THE "OFFICIAL" VERSION APPEARS INCREASINGLY LESS CREDIBLE AS EACH DAY PASSES. NEVERTHELESS, GIVEN THE PROMINENCE WHICH THE "GREEN BAY INCIDENT" HAS CAPTURED, IT MAY BE TIMELY TO CONSIDER ITS IMPACT ON THE THREE GROUPS IMMEDIATELY INVOLVED: (A) THE JDF, (B) THE GOVERNMENT AND (C) THE DISADVANTAGED OF KINGSTON WHO PROVIDED THE VICTIMS.

-- INSOFAR AS THE JDF IS CONCERNED, WHATEVER THE RESULT OF THE INQUEST MAY BE, THE "GREEN BAY INCIDENT" HAS DONE GRIEVOUS HARM. ITS MORALE IS ABYSMAL; ITS OFFICERS
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ARE DIVIDED; CAREERS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED, WHETHER FOR LYING TO PROTECT THE JDF OR TELLING THE TRUTH TO SERVE A HIGHER LOYALTY; ITS COMMANDER, MAJOR GENERAL RUDOLPH GREE, MAY BE FORCED TO RETIRE. A VERDICT OF MURDER MAY BE THE BEST THE DEFENCE FORCE CAN HOPE FOR, SINCE IT WOULD FOCUS ON A HANDFUL OF OFFICERS AND MEN RATHER THAN LEAVING THE ENTIRE JDF THE OBJECT OF SUSPICION. HOWEVER, A MURDER VERDICT MAY ALSO CAUSE WIDESPREAD DISAFFECTION WITHIN THE JDF, WITH A WIDE SPECTRUM OF OFFICERS AND MEN CONCLUDING THAT THEY ARE BEING ASKED TO PAY TOO HIGH A PRICE FOR ATTEMPTING TO PROTECT THE COMMON WEAL. WHATEVER HAPPENS, A SIGNIFICANT SHAKEUP WITHIN THE JDF IS EXPECTED. BUT WITH OR WITHOUT A SHAKEUP, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE JDF WILL SUFFER FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME TO COME.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KINGSTON 3605

GIVEN ITS IMPORTANCE TO INTERNAL SECURITY IN
TROUBLED TIMES, THIS IS A VERY UNHAPPY RESULT.

-- WITH REGARD TO THE GOVERNMENT, ITS LIFE SEEMS IN
NO WAY THREATENED BY THE FINDINGS TO DATE --
GIVEN ITS PARLIAMENTARY STRENGTH. SOME JAMAICANS
ARE PROBABLY QUITE PREPARED TO OVERLOOK INCIDENTS
LIKE THAT AT GREEN BAY WHERE THE VICTIMS WERE
THEMSELVES GUNMEN. FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW-
POINT THE ONLY DESIRABLE OUTCOME IS A VERDICT
BY THE CORONER'S COURT THAT NO INDICTMENTS ARE
WARRANTED; THE WORST, (AND MOST LIKELY) RESULT
WOULD BE INDICTMENTS OF JDF PERSONNEL FOR MURDER.
SUCH INDICTMENTS COULD RESULT IN OPENING A
PANDORA'S BOX OF ACCUSATIONS THAT COULD IMPLICATE
HIGH LEVEL OFFICIALS, PERHAPS EVEN A CABINET
MEMBER. GIVEN THE INCREASING DISSATISFACTION
WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE ON THE ECONOMIC
FRONT, THIS IS THE LAST THING THEY NEED. THIS
IS NOT TO SAY THAT INDICTMENTS ALONE COULD
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BRING THE GOVERNMENT DOWN A LA WATERGATE, WHICH DOES
NOT SEEM LIKELY, VIEWED AT THIS STAGE IN THE AFFAIR.

-- INSOFAR AS THE POPULACE OF CENTRAL AND WESTERN
KINGSTON ARE CONCERNED, A VERDICT OF MURDER MAY
BE A NECESSITY. IF THE CORONER EXONERATES THE
JDF PERSONNEL, THE REACTION IN THE DEPRESSED
AREAS OF METROPOLITAN KINGSTON WILL BE DEEPENED
CYNICISM AND A SPUR TO THE ANOMIE WHICH ALREADY
CHARACTERIZE THE AREA. SUCH A VERDICT -- EVEN
IF JUSTIFIED -- WILL BE SEEN AS A WHITEWASH,
AND REINFORCE THE DESPERATION FELT BY MANY IN
THE GHETTO. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, A VERDICT
OF MURDER IS ANNOUNCED, THERE COULD WELL BE A
VERY POSITIE REACTION, WITH MANY CONCLUDING
THAT JUSTICE IS EVEN-HANDED.

5. WHATEVER RESULTS FROM THE INQUEST, THE NUMEROUS

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REVELATIONS HAVE UNDERMINEDTHE GOVERNMENT'S
LEGITIMACY, AN OUTCOME REINFORCED BY THE REMARKS OF
NATIONAL SECURITY MINISTER DUDLEY THOMPSON. IN A
BURST OF CANDOR ON MARCH 7, THOMPSON TOLD JDF OFFICERS
THAT "NO ANGELS WERE KILLED AT GREEN BAY" -- WHICH
MAY BE TRUE BUT IS IRRELEVANT -- AND THAT "THE ONLY
THING THAT WENT WRONG IS THAT ALL OF THEM WERE NOT KILLED."
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